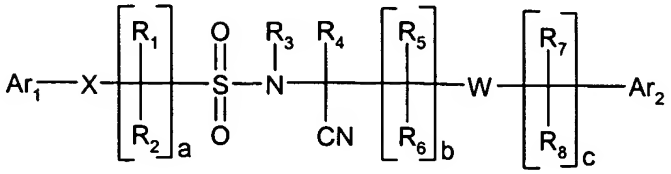
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Original): A compound of the general formula



(I)

including the optical isomers thereof and mixtures of such isomers, wherein

Ar_1 and Ar_2 independently of each other stand for an optionally substituted aryl or heteroaryl group,

R_1 and R_2 stand independently of each other for hydrogen, optionally substituted C_1-C_5alkyl, optionally substituted C_2-C_5alkenyl, C_2-C_5alkynyl or optionally substituted C_3–C_6cycloalkyl;

R_3 designates hydrogen, C_3-C_5alkenyl, C_3-C_5alkynyl or optionally substituted C_1-C_5alkyl;

R_4 is optionally substituted C_1-C_5alkyl, optionally substituted C_2-C_5alkenyl, C_2-C_5alkynyl or optionally substituted C_3–C_6cycloalkyl;

R_5 and R_6 are independently of each other hydrogen or optionally substituted C_1-C_5alkyl, optionally substituted C_2-C_5alkenyl, C_2-C_5alkynyl or optionally substituted C_3–C_6cycloalkyl;

R_7 and R_8 are independently of each other hydrogen or optionally substituted C_1-C_5alkyl, optionally substituted C_2-C_5alkenyl, C_2-C_5alkynyl or optionally substituted C_3–C_6cycloalkyl;

W designates a bridge selected from –O-, $-S(O)_m-$ or $-NR_3-$;

X designates a direct bond or a bridge selected from –O-, $-S(O)_m-$ or $-NR_3-$;

a and b independently of each other stand for a number 1, 2 or 3; and

c and m independently of each other stand for a number zero, 1 or 2.

Claim 2 (Original): A compound according to claim 1 wherein

Ar_1 stands for an aryl group which is optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R_9; or stands for a 5-ring-membered heteroaryl group comprising as ring members 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur and being optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R_{11} ; or stands for a 6-ring-membered heteroaryl group comprising as ring members 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur and being optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R_{11} ; Ar_2 stands for an aryl group which is optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R'_9 and from one radical R_{10}; or stands for a 5-ring-membered heteroaryl group comprising as ring members 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur and being optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R_{11} ; or stands for a 6-ring- membered heteroaryl group comprising as ring members 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur, and being

optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R_{11} ; or stands for a fused bicyclic heteroaryl group comprising as ring members 1 to 4 heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur, and being composed from the 5-ring- or 6-ring-membered heteroaryl groups as defined for Ar_2 with an annellated phenyl ring or with an annellated second 6-ring-membered heteroaryl, each ring and the bicyclic heteroaryl being optionally substituted with n radicals independently selected from R_{11} ;

R_1 and R_2 stand independently of each other for hydrogen or C_1-C_5alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1–C_3alkoxy or -$NR_{12}R_{13}$; or stand for C_2-C_5alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen or C_1-C_3alkoxy; or stand for C_2-C_5alkynyl; or stand for C_3-C_6cycloalkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_3alkoxy; C_1–C_3alkyl or -$NR_{12}R_{13}$;

R_3 designates hydrogen, C_3-C_5alkenyl, C_3-C_5alkynyl or C_1-C_3alkyl optionally substituted by C_1–C_3alkoxy; C_3-C_5alkenyloxy or C_3-C_5alkynyloxy;

R_4 is C_1-C_5-alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1–C_3alkoxy or -$NR_{12}R_{13}$; or is C_2-C_5alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen or C_1–C_3alkoxy; or is C_2-C_5alkynyl; or is C_3-C_6cycloalkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1–C_3alkoxy or C_1–C_3alkyl;

R_5 and R_6 are independently of each other hydrogen or C_1-C_5alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1–C_3alkoxy or -$NR_{12}R_{13}$; or are C_2-C_5alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen or C_1-C_3alkoxy; or are C_2-C_5alkynyl; or are C_3–C_6cycloalkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_3alkoxy; C_1–C_3alkyl or -$NR_{12}R_{13}$;

R_7 and R_8 are independently of each other hydrogen or C_1-C_5alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1–C_3alkoxy or -$NR_{12}R_{13}$; or are C_2-C_5alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen or C_1-C_3alkoxy; or are C_2-C_5alkynyl; or are C_3–C_6cycloalkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_3alkoxy; C_1–C_3alkyl or -$NR_{12}R_{13}$;

R_9 and R'_9 independently of each other stand for C_1-C_5alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1–C_4alkoxy, -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -CO-R_{14} or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14} , by a -X-aryl which is optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2, -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -CO-R_{14} or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14}; by a -X-linked-5- or 6-ring-membered heteroaryl group optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2, -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -CO-R_{14} or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14} ; or stand for C_3-C_6cycloalkyl, optionally substituted by halogen, hydroxy, =O, C_1-C_4alkoxy, $NR_{12}R_{13}$; or stand for C_1–C_4alkoxy optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkoxy, by -X-aryl which is optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2, -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -CO-R_{14} or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14}; by a X-linked-5- or 6-ring-membered heteroaryl group optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2, -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -CO-R_{14} or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14}; or stand for C_2-C_5alkenyl

optionally substituted by halogen or aryl; or stand for C_2-C_5alkynyl optionally substituted by halogen, tri-alkyl-silyl or aryl; or stand for C_2-C_5alkenyloxy optionally substituted by halogen or aryl; or stand for C_2-C_5alkynyloxy optionally substituted by halogen, tri-alkyl-silyl or aryl; or stand for C_3-C_6cycloalkoxy optionally substituted by C_1-C_3alkyl, halogen or C_1-C_4alkoxy; or stand for halogen; or stand for -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, or stand for -NR_2-CO-R_{12} ; or stand for –NR_2-CO-OR_{12} ; or stand for -NR_2-CO-NR_8R_9 ; or stand for -NR_2-CO-SR_{12} ; or stand for –NR_2-CS-OR_{12} ; or stand for -NR_2-CS-NR_8R_9 ; or stand for -NR_2-CS-SR_{12} ; or stand for –NR_2-C(=N-O-R_{12})-S-OR_{12} ; or stand for -NR_2-C(=N-O-R_{12})-NR_8R_9 ; or stand for -NR_2-C(=N-O-R_{12})-SR_{12} ; or stand for -$S(O)_p$-C_1-C_4alkyl optionally substituted by halogen; or stand for -NR_2-SO_2-NR_8R_9 ; or stand for nitro , for cyano or for –CS-NH_2;

R_{10} stands for hydrogen; or stands for -X-aryl which is optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1-C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2 , -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -CO-R_{14} or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14} ; or stands for a X-linked 5-membered aromatic or non-aromatic heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur as ring members and being optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2 , -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -CO-R_{14} or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14} ; or stands for a X-linked 6-membered aromatic or non-aromatic heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur as ring members and being optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2 , -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -CO-R_{14} or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14} ; or stands for -CO-R_{14} or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14} ; or stands for -O-CO-R_{14} ; or stands for –C(=N-O-R_{12})-R_{14} ;

R_{10} and one R'_9 together form a 3- or 4-membered non-aromatic bridge forming an annellated ring which may contain a carbonyl function or nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur as ring members and is optionally substituted by C_1-C_3alkyl;

R_{11} is hydrogen, halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -NO_2, -CN, -CO-R_{14} or the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14} ;

W designates a bridge selected from –O-, -$S(O)_m$- or -NR_3- ;

X designates a direct bond or a bridge selected from –O-, -$S(O)_m$- or -NR_3- ;

a stands for a number 1, 2 or 3;

b stands for a number 1, 2 or 3;

c stands for a number zero, 1 or 2;

m stands for a number zero, 1 or 2;

n stands for a number 1 or 2;

p stands for a number 0, 1 or 2;

R_{12} and R_{13} independently of each other stand for hydrogen; C_1–C_5alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, C_1-C_4alkylamino, di(C_1-C_4alkyl)amino, or aryl which in turn is

optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1-C_4alkoxy or -CN ; or stand for C_3–C_5alkenyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, C_1-C_4alkylamino, di(C_1-C_4alkyl)amino, or aryl which in turn is optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1-C_4alkoxy or -CN; or stand for C_3–C_5alkynyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, C_1-C_4alkylamino, di(C_1-C_4alkyl)amino, or aryl which in turn is optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1.C_4alkoxy or -CN; or together form a 5-ring-membered non-aromatic carbocyclic ring; or together form a 6-ring-membered non-aromatic carbocyclic ring which is interrupted by –O- or -N(C_1-C_4alkyl)- ;

R_{14} stands for C_1-C_5alkyl optionally substituted by halogen, C_1–C_4alkoxy, C_1-C_4alkylamino, di(C_1-C_4alkyl)amino; aryl which in turn is optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1–C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2, C_1-C_4alkylamino, di(C_1-C_4alkyl)amino or C_1-C_4alkylcarbonyl, C_1-C_4alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_4alkylaminocarbonyl or di(C_1-C_4alkyl)aminocarbonyl; or by a 5- or 6-ring hetero-aromatic ring which in turn is optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl C_1–C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2, C_1-C_4alkylamino, di(C_1-C_4alkyl)amino, C_1-C_4alkylcarbonyl, C_1-C_4alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_4alkylaminocarbonyl or di-(C_1-C_4alkyl)aminocarbonyl; or stands for C_3-C_6cycloalkyl optionally substituted by halogen, hydroxy, =O, C_1–C_4alkoxy or C_1-C_4alkylamino, di(C_1-C_4alkyl)amino; or stands for C_1–C_4alkoxy optionally substituted by halogen, C_1–C_4alkoxy; C_1-C_4alkylamino, di(C_1-C_4alkyl)amino; or stands for phenyl which is optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1-C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2, C_1-C_4alkylamino, di(C_1-C_4alkyl)amino, C_1-C_4al-kylcarbonyl, C_1-C_4alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_4alkylaminocarbonyl or di-(C_1-C_4alkyl)aminocarbonyl; or stands for a 5- or 6-ring membered heteroaryl comprising nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur as ring members and being optionally substituted by halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl; C_1-C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2, C_1-C_4alkylamino, di(C_1-C_4alkyl)amino, C_1-C_4alkylcarbonyl, C_1-C_4alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_4alkylaminocarbonyl or di-(C_1-C_4alkyl)aminocarbonyl.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A compound according to claim 1, ~~claims 1 or 2 wherein~~ wherein Ar_1 and Ar_2 independently of each other stand for optionally substituted phenyl; and the optional substituents R_9 of Ar_1 are preferably selected from the group comprising halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1-C_4alkoxy, C_1-C_4haloalkoxy, C_3-C_6cycloalkyl, -CN and -CO-R_{14}; and the optional substituents R'_9 of Ar_2 are preferably selected from the group comprising halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1-C_4alkoxy, C_1-C_4haloalkoxy, C_3-C_6cycloalkyl, -CN, -CO-R_{14} , -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -NR_2-CO-R_{12}, -NR_3-CO-OR_{12} , -NR_2-CO-NR_8R_9 , -NR_2-CO-SR_{12} , -NR_2-CS-OR_{12} , -NR_2-CS-NR_8R_9 , -NR_2-CS-SR_{12} , -$S(O)_p$-C_1-C_4alkyl , -$S(O)_p$-C_1-C_4haloalkyl , -NR_2-SO_2-NR_8R_9 , nitro , cyano and -CS-NH_2; and the optional substituent R_{10} on Ar_2 is selected from optionally substituted phenyl, optionally substituted imidazolyl, optionally substituted thiazolyloxy, optionally substituted

pyridyloxy, optionally substituted pyridyl, optionally substituted pyrimidinyloxy, optionally substituted pyrimidinyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyl, optionally substituted triazolyl, optionally substituted pyrazolyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyloxy, optionally substituted triazolyloxy and optionally substituted pyrazolyloxy.

Claim 4 (Original): A compound of formula I according to claim 1 wherein
Ar_1 and Ar_2 independently stand for optionally substituted aryl groups; and
the optional substituents R_9 of Ar_1 are preferably selected from the group comprising halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1-C_4alkoxy, C_1-C_4haloalkoxy, C_3-C_6cycloalkyl, -CN and -CO-R_{14}; and
the optional substituents R'_9 of Ar_2 are preferably selected from the group comprising halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1-C_4alkoxy, C_1-C_4haloalkoxy, C_3-C_6cycloalkyl, -CN, -CO-R_{14} , -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -NR_2-CO-R_{12}, –NR_3-CO-OR_{12} , -NR_2-CO-NR_8R_9 , -NR_2-CO-SR_{12} , -NR_2-CS-OR_{12} , -NR_2-CS-NR_8R_9 , -NR_2-CS-SR_{12} , -$S(O)_p$-C_1-C_4alkyl , -$S(O)_p$-C_1-C_4haloalkyl , -NR_2-SO_2-NR_8R_9 , nitro , cyano and -CS-NH_2; and
the optional substituent R_{10} on Ar_2 is selected from halogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1-C_4alkoxy, -CN, -NO_2 , -$NR_{12}R_{13}$, -CO-R_{14} and the acyclic or cyclic ketals and acetals of -CO-R_{14} ; -O–CO-R_{14} , optionally substituted phenyl, optionally substituted imidazolyl, optionally substituted thiazolyloxy, optionally substituted pyridyloxy, optionally substituted pyridyl, optionally substituted pyrimidinyloxy, optionally substituted pyrimidinyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyl, optionally substituted triazolyl, optionally substituted pyrazolyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyloxy, optionally substituted triazolyloxy and optionally substituted pyrazolyloxy; and
R_1, R_2, R_5, R_6, R_7 and R_8 independently of each other are hydrogen or methyl; and
R_3 is hydrogen or C_1-C_4alkyl optionally substituted with C_1-C_4alkoxy, C_3-C_4alkenyloxy, or C_3-C_4alkynyloxy; and
R_4 is hydrogen or C_1-C_4alkyl optionally substituted with halogen, C_1-C_3alkoxy , C_1-C_3alkylamino or di-C_1-C_3alkylamino; and
W is –O- ; and
X is a direct bond; and
the suffixes (a) and (b) designate the number 1 ; and
the suffix (c) stands for the number zero.

Claim 5. (Original): A compound of formula I according to claim 1 wherein
Ar_1 and Ar_2 independently of each other stand for optionally substituted phenyl; and
the optional substituents R_9 and R'_9 of Ar_1 and Ar_2 are selected from the group comprising C_1-C_4alkyl, C_1-C_4haloalkyl, C_1-C_4alkoxy, C_1-C_4haloalkoxy and C_3-C_6cycloalkyl; and

the optional substituent R_{10} on Ar_2 is selected from –CO-C_1-C_4alkyl , –CO-C_1-C_4alkoxy, -O-CO-C_1-C_4alkyl, optionally substituted phenyl, optionally substituted phenoxy, optionally substituted imidazolyl, optionally substituted imidazolyloxy, optionally substituted thiazolyloxy, optionally substituted thiazolyl, optionally substituted thiadiazolyloxy, optionally substituted thiadiazolyl, optionally substituted pyridyloxy, optionally substituted pyridyl, optionally substituted pyrimidinyloxy, optionally substituted pyrimidinyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyl, optionally substituted oxadiazolyloxy, optionally substituted triazolyl, optionally substituted pyrazolyl, optionally substituted triazolyloxy and optionally substituted pyrazolyloxy; and

R_1 and R_5 are independently C_1-C_4alkyl and R_2 and R_6 are hydrogen; and

R_3 is hydrogen, C_1-C_4alkyl or C_1-C_4alkoxy-C_1-C_4alkyl; and

R_4 is C_1-C_4alkyl or C_1-C_4haloalkyl; and

W is –O- ; and

X is a direct bond; and

the suffixes (a) and (b) designate the number 1 ; and

the suffix (c) stands for the number zero.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A compound of formula I according to claim 1, wherein~~; or wherein~~ Ar_1 and Ar_2 independently of each other stand for optionally substituted phenyl; and

the optional substituents R_9 and R'_9 of Ar_1 and Ar_2 are selected from the group comprising bromo, chloro, fluoro, iodo, cyano, hydroxy, amino, nitro, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, methoxy, ethoxy, propoxy, isopropoxy, allyloxy, propargyloxy, benzyloxy, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, 2-cyano-2-methyl-butyloxy, methylsulfonyl, methylsulfinyl, methylthio, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, aminocarbonylmethyl, methoximinoethyl, aminocarbonyl, butylcarbonylamino, tert-butylcarbonylamino, triazol-1-ylmethyl, 1,2,4-triazol-1-ylmethyl, N-morpholinocarbonylamino, aminocarbonyloxy-ethoxy, morpholinocarbonyloxyethoxy and cyanopyridyloxyethoxy; and

the optional substituent R_{10} on Ar_2 is selected from aminocarbonyl, dimethylaminocarbonyl, acetyl, propionyl, acetoxy, methoxycarbonyl, ethoxycarbonyl, benzoyl, methoximinoethyl, 1-imidazolyl, 5-(3-methyl-1,2,4-thiadiazolyloxy), 2-pyridyl, 2-pyridyloxy, 4-pyrimidinyl, 2-(3,5-dichloropyridyloxy), 2-(4,6-dichloropyridyloxy), 2-(4,6-dimethoxypyrimidinylthio), 2-oxadiazolyl, 2-(5-methyl-oxadazolyl), 2-(5-ethyl-oxadiazolyl), 1-triazolyl, 1-pyrazolyl, 1-(3,4-dimethylpyrazolyl), 4-(2-methylthiazolyl), 2-(1,3,4-oxydiazolyl), N-pyrrolidin-2-onyl, and 2-quinoxalinyl, and

R_1 and R_5 are independently C_1-C_4alkyl and R_2 and R_6 are hydrogen; and

R_3 is hydrogen, C_1-C_4alkyl or C_1-C_4alkoxy-C_1-C_4alkyl; and

R_4 is C_1-C_4alkyl or C_1-C_4haloalkyl; and

W is –O- ; and

X is a direct bond; and
the suffixes (a) and (b) designate the number 1 ; and
the suffix (c) stands for the number zero.

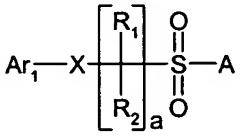
Claim 7 (Original): A compound according to claim 1, wherein
Ar_1 and Ar_2 independently of each other stand for optionally substituted phenyl; and
the optional substituents R_9 and R'_9 of Ar_1 and Ar_2 are selected from the group comprising bromo, chloro, fluoro, methyl, ethyl, methoxy, ethoxy, trifluoromethyl and trifluoromethoxy; and
the optional substituent R_{10} on Ar_2 is selected from aminocarbonyl, acetyl, methoxycarbonyl, ethoxycarbonyl, 1-imidazolyl, 5-(3-methyl-1,2,4-thiadiazolyloxy), 2-pyridyl, 2-pyridyloxy, 4-pyrimidinyl, 2-(3,5-dichloropyridyloxy), 2-(4,6-dimethoxypyrimidinylthio), 2-oxadiazolyl, 2-(5-methyl-oxadazolyl), 2-(5-ethyl-oxadiazolyl), 1-triazolyl, 1-pyrazolyl, 4-(2-methylthiazolyl), 2-(1,3,4-oxydiazolyl), and N-pyrrolidin-2-onyl, and
R_1 and R_5 are methyl and R_2 and R_6 are hydrogen; and
R_3 is hydrogen , methyl , ethyl, propyl, ethoxymethyl or methoxymethyl, and
R_4 is methyl , ethyl, propyl or fluoromethyl; and
W is –O- ; and
X is a direct bond; and
the suffixes (a) and (b) designate the number 1 ; and
the suffix (c) stands for the number zero.

Claim 8 (Original): A compound of formula I according to claim 1 selected from the group comprising
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-[(2-chlorophenyl)-methyl]-sulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-[(2-fluorophenyl)-methyl]-sulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-trifluoromethoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-chloro-3-methylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-3-methoxy-propionitrile,
2-[(4-acetylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-methoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-acetylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-cyanophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
(-)-2-[(4-cyanophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,

2-[(4-propionylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-ethoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-[1,2,4]triazol-1-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-imidazol-1-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-cyanophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-[1,3,4]oxadiazol-4-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-methoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-ethoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
(-)2-[(4-ethoxyphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-[1,2,4]triazol-1-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-methoxycarbonylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
2-[(4-propionylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-chlorophenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-3-fluoro-propionitrile,
2-{[4-(2-methyl-thiazol-4-yl)-phenoxy]-methyl}-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-pyrazol-1-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-(5-oxo-5,6,7,8-tetrahydronaphth-2-yloxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-chloro-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-3-methyl-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-iso-propyl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-nitro-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(4-cyano-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile,
2-[(3-fluoro-4-propionyl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile,
(-) -2-[(4-[1,2,4]triazol-1-yl-phenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-butyronitrile, and
(-)-2-[(4-acetylphenoxy)-methyl]-2-benzylsulfonylamino-propionitrile.

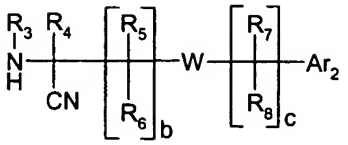
Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula I according to claim 1, which comprises reacting

a) reacting the ~~the~~ sulfonylating agent of formula II



(II)

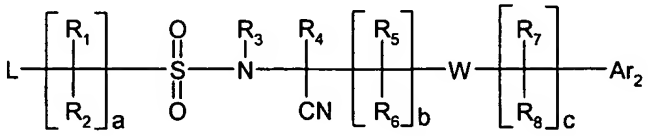
wherein ~~wherein~~ Ar_1, a, X and R_1 to R_2 , are defined as under formula I, and A stands for a leaving group like an anhydride, i.e. $-O-SO_2-(CR_1R_2)_a-X-Ar_1$ or $-O-CO-C_1-C_4$alkyl, but preferably for halogen, especially bromine or more preferably chlorine, with an amino-acetonitrile of formula III



(III)

wherein Ar_2, b, c, W and R_3 to R_8 , are defined as under formula I, or

b) coupling the reacting the compound of formula XIII



(XIII)

~~wherein~~ wherein Ar_1, Ar_2, a, b, c, W and R_1 to R_8 are defined as under formula I and L is a leaving group such as e.g. halogen, preferably chlorine, bromine or iodine or a sulfonyloxy group such as e.g. methylsulfonyloxy-, toluylsulfonyloxy- or trifluoromethylsulfonyloxy- group, is coupled with a compound of formula XIV

$$Ar_1—X' \qquad (XIV)$$

wherein Ar_1 is defined as under formula I and X' is either an anionic radical species of X such as O^-, S^-, $S(O)_m^-$ combined with an alkaline- or earthalkaline– metal cation as counterion or is defined as X-H such as OH, SH, NHR_3 if at the same time the reaction is generally carried out in the presence of a base such as alkaline-, earthalkaline-carbonates or hydrogencarbonates such e.g. sodium or potassium-carbonate, sodium or potassium –hydrogen-carbonate, cesium-carbonate or an agent capable of scavenging the formed acid.

Claim 10 (Original): A composition for controlling and protecting against phytopathogenic microorganisms, comprising a compound of formula I according to claim 1 as active ingredient together with a suitable carrier.

Claim 11 (Cancelled).

Claim 12 (Original): A method of controlling and preventing an infestation of crop plants by phytopathogenic microorganisms, which comprises the application of a compound of formula I according to claim 1 as active ingredient to the plant, to parts of plants or to the locus thereof.

Claim 13 (Original): A method according to claim 12, wherein the phytopathogenic microorganisms are fungal organisms.